

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
CINCPAC
CINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR
AMCONSUL KARACHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 6021

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, ETRD, XD
SQBFECT: PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS: THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP
STILL EXTENDED

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 5760 (NOTAL) (B) ISLAMABAD 5843 (NOTAL)
(C) ISLAMABAD 5662 (D) ISLAMABAD 5166

1. DURING CALL ON AMIR USMAN, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, AND TURKEY, CONVERSATION TOUCHED ON A NUMBER
OF TOPICS OF RECENT REPORTING INTEREST:

A. USMAN AGAIN DENIED ANY KNOWLEGE OF SO-CALLED
EIGHT-PARTY AFGHAN OPPOSITION COALITION IN RAWALPINDI OR
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ANYWHERE ELSE IN PAKISTAN. FURTHER CHECKING BY MFA HAD
TURNED UP NOTHING MORE THAN HE HAD DISCLOSED TO US EARLIER,
HE SAID, EXCEPT THAT IT APPEARS THAT REUTERS STORY--
WHICH WAS BASIS OF BBC'S--WAS PROMPTED BY HANDOUT GIVEN
VARIOUS REPORTERS IN RAWALPINDI AREA BY A YOUNG AFGHAN
WHOSE NAME NO ONE REMEMBERS. POLCOUNS NOTED AFGHAN
GOVERNMENT (DRA) SEEMS TO BELIEVE THERE IS SOME FIRE

HERE AS RESULT OF ALL THIS SMOKE; USMAN AGREED, BUT SAID DRA IS ACTING AS IF IT FINDS STORY USEFUL FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES IN RESISTING GOP EFFORTS TO KEEP THE RELATIONSHIP FROM TAKING PRECIPITOUS DOWNWARD TURN (REF A).

B. USMAN SAID GOP HAS NO FURTHER INDICATIONS OF LARGE-SCALE EXODUS FROM AFGHANISTAN ACROSS PAK-AFGHAN BORDER. NUMBER MOST FREQUENTLY COMING UP IS 100-120, WHICH--IF ACCURATE--IS WELL WITHIN THE NORMAL EBB AND FLOW OF PUSHTUN-SPEAKING TRIBESMEN ACROSS BORDER (REF B).

C. ASKED ABOUT GHAFAR KHAN'S ACTIVITIES, USMAN SAID GOP UNDERSTANDS HE IS LEAVING KABUL FOR MOSCOW MEDICAL TREATMENT THIS WEEK. GHAFAR'S GRANDSON, WHO HAS BEEN IN JALABAD WITH HIM DURING HIS STAY IN AFGHANISTAN, IS PLANNING TO RETURN TO PAKISTAN. USMAN SAID GOP UNDERSTANDS THAT GHAFAR KHAN FINDS THE CLIMATE IN JALALABAD SALUBRIOUS FOR HIS VARIOUS ACHES AND PAINS AND MAY RETURN THERE AFTER HE COMES BACK FROM MOSCOW (REF C).

2. POLCOUNS REFERRED TO AMB'S EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH FONSEC AND ASKED STATUS OF GOP EFFORT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FREIGHT CARS TO MOVE BACKLOG OF AFGHAN FOODSTUFFS FROM KARACHI TO AFGHAN BORDER VIA QUETTA. USMAN REPLIED THAT BY 21 JUNE THE ENTIRE AFGHAN BACKLOG SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLEARED
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OUT OF KARACHI. HE REFERRED ALSO TO GOP APPROVAL AND FACILITATION OF SHIPMENT OF INDIAN PESTICIDES ACROSS PAKISTAN FROM WAGAH BORDER CROSSING POINT TO AFGHAN BORDER AT TORKHAM IN RESPONSE TO URGENT AFGHAN GOVERNMENT (DRA) PLEA RELATED TO CONCERNS ABOUT COTTON CROP (REF D).

3. FINALLY, USMAN REFERRED TO AN EARLIER CONVERSATION HE HAD WITH EMBOFF RAPHEL ABOUT DRA PLANS TO PURCHASE 50,000 TONS OF INDIAN WHEAT, NOTING THAT PURCHASE HAS BEEN CONCLUDED AT LAST. IN RESPONSE TO DRA REQUEST, HE SAID, GOP IS ABOUT TO APPROVE TRANSIT OF THE ENTIRE SHIPMENT ACROSS PAKISTAN OVERLAND FROM INDIAN PUNJAB, VIA WAGAH, TO PESHAWAR, INSTEAD OF USUAL (AND MORE TIME-CONSUMING) ROUTE WHICH INCLUDES SHIPMENT BY SEA FROM BOMBAY TO KARACHI. USMAN NOTED THAT COMMERCE MINISTRY HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON THIS -- REITERATING CONCERN THAT, IN ABSENCE OF TRANSIT AGREEMENT, EXCEPTIONS FOR DRA MIGHT BECOME THE RULE. HOWEVER, MFA HAS ARGUED -- HE BELIEVES SUCCESSFULLY -- THAT AS PART OF ITS EXTRA EFFORT TO KEEP RELATIONS FROM SNAGGING ON SMALL MATTERS AND TO KEEP THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP EXTENDED, EXCEPTION FOR WHEAT SHIPMENT SHOULD BE MADE.
HUMMEL

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